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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1326
INFO EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ATHENS 000021

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR WHA/CCA:KIMBERLY PENLAND
DEPT ALSO FOR WHA/CCA:JARAH HILLSMAN
AMEMBASSY ANKARA PASS TO AMCONSUL ADANA
AMEMBASSY ASTANA PASS TO AMCONSUL ALMATY
AMEMBASSY BERLIN PASS TO AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF
AMEMBASSY BERLIN PASS TO AMCONSUL LEIPZIG
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE PASS TO AMEMBASSY PODGORICA
AMEMBASSY HELSINKI PASS TO AMCONSUL ST PETERSBURG
AMEMBASSY ATHENS PASS TO AMCONSUL THESSALONIKI
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PASS TO AMCONSUL VLADIVOSTOK
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PASS TO AMCONSUL YEKATERINBURG

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SUBJECT: Greek Engagement with Cuba

REF: 09 STATE 131637; 09 ATHENS 841

CLASSIFIED BY: Deborah A. McCarthy, Deputy Chief of Mission; REASON:
1.4(B), (D)

¶1. (C) On January 13, Poloff raised REF A points with Anastopoulos Chanos, Second Secretary in the MFA A8 Directorate for South America and the Caribbean. Econoff also raised points with Ioannis Klonias, MFA B5 Directorate for Economic Relations with Central and South America, Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia. According to the MFA officials, Greece will continue to follow EU consensus on all Cuba-related issues and was supportive of an EU policy that was "balanced" and focused on both human rights as well as opportunities for engagement. Chanos said Greece had no strong policy interests either way regarding Cuba and that the Greece-Cuba relationship was currently limited to an occasional exchange of official visitors and consular support of the small Greek community in Havana.

¶2. (C) The last Cuban official to visit Greece was Fernando Ramirez de Estenoz Barciela, Head of the Department of International Relations of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba. Ramirez met briefly with President Karolos Papoulias and former Foreign Minister Dora Bakoyiannis. (See REF B.) The last meeting of MFA principals was in May 2006, when Cuban Deputy Foreign Minister Eumelio Caballero (responsible for European affairs) met Greek Deputy Foreign Minister Yannis Valinakis.

¶3. (C) Greece has diplomatic relations with Cuba and the two countries exchanged ambassadors and had reciprocal embassies. However, according to Chanos, Greek diplomats do not do any human rights, opposition party, or civil society outreach, aside from providing support to St. Nikolaos, a new Greek Orthodox Church opened in Havana in 2004.

¶4. (C) The following information, obtained from MFA officials and website (www.mfa.gr), may be useful for Libertad Act considerations:

-- ACADEMIC RELATIONS: The University of Havana hosts one Greek professor in Modern Greek Studies as part of the Chair of Classic Literature. Greece has no other official, regular academic or

medical exchanges with Cuba. However, Chanos noted that Greek and Cuban doctors may participate in private medical exchanges.

-- CULTURAL/ARTS RELATIONS: For the last several years, Greece has not officially sponsored any cultural or arts exchanges with Cuba. The Cuban embassy in Athens sponsors its own arts program, with a December 2008 visit by the Cuban National Ballet and participation by Cuban filmmakers in a Spanish-language film festival in May 2009.

-- ECONOMIC AND TRADE RELATIONS: The most recent public statistics on trade are from 2003. During that year, Greek exports to Cuba were 602,711 USD and Cuban exports to Greece 773,839 USD. Tourism statistics from 2004 show no tourists arrivals from Cuba, while 9,074 Greeks visited Cuba. With respect to investments that Greek businesses have made in Cuba, Chanos said the MFA does not track this information. Chanos stated that he did not think Greek businesses had made any large-scale investments in Cuba, but they could not confirm this with certainty as Greek businesses are not required to file information with the government regarding their foreign investments. Chanos confirmed that no Greek state-owned energy or public utilities companies had investments in Cuba.

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-- BILATERAL AGREEMENTS: The following agreements between Greece and Cuba are in force:

- Educational Agreement (1983)
 - Agreement on the Mutual Encouragement and Protection of Investments (1996)
 - Agreement on Economic and Technological Cooperation (1997)
 - Air Cooperation Agreement (1998)
 - Memorandum of understanding on Cooperation between the Ministries of Foreign Affairs (2001, signed during visit of Cuban Foreign Minister Felipe Prez Roque to Greece)
- Speckhard